

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 002394

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/03/2025

TAGS: PREL PGOV PTER IZ

SUBJECT: AL-ANBAR GOVERNOR KILLED; PROVINCIAL COUNCIL ELECTS REPLACEMENT

Classified By: Acting Political Counselor Henry S. Ensher.  
Reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Joint Coalition and Iraqi Security Forces discovered the body of Al-Anbar Governor, Raja Nawaf Farhan May 29. The Anbar Provincial Council met June 1 in a special session and selected current PC Chairman, Engineer Ma'moun Sami Rasheed, as the new governor. Former Governor Fassal Nejiris Al-Ghaoud claimed he remains Governor of Anbar. END SUMMARY.

-----  
BACKGROUND  
-----

¶2. (C) The Al Anbar Provincial Council (PC) selected Raja Nawaf Farhan as the Governor of Anbar Province on May 5. Within days, insurgents/terrorists revealed they had kidnapped him en route to the provincial capital Ramadi. (NOTE: The governor served as mayor of Al-Qa'im, a city located on the western-most part of the province, approximately 20 km from the Syrian border. He had taken an active role against insurgent elements in the area. END NOTE.)

¶3. (C) Joint Coalition and Iraqi Security Forces conducted cordon and search operations against a suspected terrorist safe house in the Rawah area on May 29. Iraqi soldiers fought side-by-side with U.S. forces in the operation. The Governor was found dead inside the destroyed building, where he had been chained to a propane tank. Four foreign fighters were killed in the operation: three Saudis and one Moroccan; two Syrians, an Algerian and a Jordanian were detained.

-----  
COUNCIL SELECTS NEW GOVERNOR  
-----

¶4. (C) The PC met June 1 in a special session to discuss next steps; twenty-seven members attended the meeting. They unanimously agreed to move ahead with the selection of a new governor, electing current PC Chairman, Ma'moun Sami Rasheed (biographic information -- para 8). He was the only candidate considered for the job; a replacement PC Chairman has not yet been identified by council members. Current Deputy Governor Taleb Ibrahim will continue in that role.

-----  
FORMER GOVERNOR CLAIMS TITLE  
-----

¶5. (C) In Baghdad, ex-governor Fassal al-Ghaoud, attended a May 31 meeting hosted by Minister for Provincial Affairs, Sa'ad Naif Hardan, according to Anbar Provincial Council Secretary Sheikh Hussein Zubair Thelej who also attended.

SIPDIS

He reported that Fassal (once again) declared himself to be the legitimate Governor of Anbar Province, and he intended to establish a provincial administrative office in the Babil Hotel in Baghdad. Fassal added that he would not return to Ramadi until the Marines left the city; he "ordered" Deputy Governor Taleb Ibrahim barred from entering Ramadi or its Government Center. According to Sheikh Hussein, the Minister of State and several others in attendance welcomed Fassal's statement and plans, while others expressed puzzlement and disbelief. Sheikh Hussein told Marine officers in Fallujah that he had asked Fassal if he wanted to settle this dispute with "fists" or by the "law." Fassal chose "law". The Sheikh said he then began to read from the TAL and CPA 71 to make the point that the PC's election of a new Governor had been in accordance with the law. After the meeting, said Hussein, several Iraqi military officers in attendance (apparently at Fassal and Minister's invitation) thanked him for citing the law, of which they were not aware.

¶6. (C) Comment. The quick election of Ma'moun as the new governor represents a positive step; any gap in continuity in provincial leadership would add to Anbar's ongoing governance challenges. Ma'moun has already established a credible and effective working relationship with the Coalition in his capacity as PC Chairman. He proved to be

an adept facilitator at the PRDC's first meeting May 29. (septel).

17. (C) Fassal Al-Ghaoud's positioning and antics in Baghdad are not surprising, but could lead to more substantive problems if left unaddressed by the ITG. (NOTE: Fassal claims the January 30 the Provincial Council elections were invalid and has contested since then the PC's legal standing. End Note.) High-level ITG engagement regarding Fassal's claims would help reaffirm the legitimacy of new Governor Ma'moun's status as the troubled province's new leader.

18. (C) Biographic information on Ma'moun Sami Rasheed: Civil Engineer, leader of the Iraqi Islamic Party in Al-Anbar; is a devout Muslim. Served on the Provincial Council since 2004 (including during the CPA-era) and has been acting President of the PC since March 2005. Ma'moun is charismatic, intelligent and well spoken; he has developed an effective working relationship with coalition representatives in the province.

19. (U) REO HILLA, REO BASRA, REO MOSUL, and REO KIRKUK, minimize considered.

Satterfield